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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 000167

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2017

TAGS: PREL BA I2 REGION

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER SUPPORTS HOLDING NEIGHBORS
MINISTERIAL MEETING INSIDE IRAQ

REF: A. BAGHDAD 600

1B. BAGHDAD 567

Classified By: Ambassador William T. Monroe for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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11. (C) Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa told the Ambassador February 22, during a meeting covering several subjects (septels), that he supports holding an Iraq Neighbors meeting at the ministerial level in Baghdad or anywhere else on Iraqi territory. He understood that there was conflicting information about holding the meeting, and he wanted to clarify that Bahrain feels it is important to hold the meeting inside Iraq at this time. If providing security for all the visiting delegations in Baghdad is too daunting a task for the GOI, given everything else going on, Bahrain supports having the meeting elsewhere - Erbil, Suleimaniyah, or near the Kuwaiti or Jordanian borders. The GOI should feel that it has options. For security reasons, there is no need to announce the meeting ahead of time, particularly if P-5 ministers are involved.

12. (C) Shaikh Khalid preferred not to hold a sub-ministerial meeting before the ministerial meeting. He thought a sub-ministerial meeting would "push everything back too much." The parties involved should move straight to a ministerial meeting. That said, he clearly was ready for Bahrain to agree to whatever format/arrangements are made.

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